Improvement of National Highways in N.E. Region

539. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of projects/proposals undertaken/contemplated *vis-a-vis* expansion and improvement of National Highways in North Eastern Region; and

(b) the details of stages of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Two hundred and fifty five road and bridge works are under various stages of progress in the North Eastern Region. As Ninth Plan is yet to be finalised, it is too early to give the details of projects contemplated.

Formation of new Karnataka Regiment

540. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister has recently announced the formation of a new Karnataka Regiment;

(b) if so, whether the Army had requested the formation of a new Regiment in Karnataka;

(c) the cost of raising a regiment; and

(d) the reasons for this unbudgeted expenditure when there is a serious resource crunch?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) to (d) Prime Minister has recently proposed the setting up of a Karnataka Regiment. The matter is being further considered in consultation with the Army Headquarters.

Mahakali River Project

541. PROF. RAM KAPSE : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had undertaken a multipurpose project on Mahakali river at Tanakpur under the Mahakali Agreement with Nepal;

(b) if so, the salient features of the agreement and the present status of the project; and

(c) by when the project is expected to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Government of India has constructed a barrage on Mahakali river at Tanakpur with a power house with installed capacity of 120 MW. Mahakali Treaty with Nepal envisages construction of Pancheswar multipurpose project on Mahakali river upstream of the existing Tanakpur barrage as a joint project with Nepal.

(b) Salient features of the Treaty are:—

1. Existing arrangements for supply of water to Nepal from Sarda barrage to be continued.
2. From the Tanakpur Barrage, water supply of 1000 cusecs in the wet season and 300 cusecs in the dry seasons as against 150 cusecs under the earlier agreement with Nepal.
3. Supply of electric power of 70 Million Kwh to Nepal from Tanakpur power station against the earlier agreement to supply 20 Million Kwh, free of cost.
4. Implementing the Pancheshwar Multi-purpose project on Mahakali river in accordance with the Detailed Project Report (DPR) being jointly prepared by both the parties, as an Integrated Project with power stations of equal capacity on each side of the river. The total energy generated shall be shared equally between the parties. The DPR shall be finalised within